

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of laser beam machining: comprising the steps of:

wherein disposing a plurality of laser diode arrays ~~are disposed~~ in a direction of a width of a part to be processed in such a manner as to allow radiation of laser beams in a the direction of a the width of a part to be processed, and

wherein controlling each of the laser diode arrays ~~is controlled~~ in accordance with the direction of the width of the part to be processed so as to shape laser beams and irradiate the part to be processed with the laser beams.

2. (Currently amended) The method of laser beam machining according to claim 1,

wherein ~~each of the laser diode arrays is controlled~~ and laser beams are shaped such that distribution of energy is changed in accordance with a width position of the part to be processed.

3. (Previously presented) The method of laser beam machining according to claim 2,

wherein the distribution of energy is changed by controlling each of the laser diode arrays and shaping the laser beams such that laser beams with which the part to be processed is irradiated in its widthwise marginal portions exhibit a higher intensity than laser beams with which the part to be processed is irradiated in its widthwise central portion.

4. (Previously presented) The method of laser beam machining according to claim 1,

wherein laser beam machining is a processing which is selected from padding, welding and hardening and to which the part to be processed is subjected.

5. (Previously presented) The method of laser beam machining according to claim 2,

wherein laser beam machining is a processing which is selected from padding, welding and hardening and to which the part to be processed is subjected.

6. (Previously presented) The method of laser beam machining according to claim 3,

wherein laser beam machining is a processing which is selected from padding, welding and hardening and to which the part to be processed is subjected.